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Senate

The Senate met at 4 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

We praise You, Lord, for You have rescued us. You refuse to permit our enemies to win. Help us to so live that the generations to come will know of Your mighty acts.

Today, give our lawmakers the singularity of heart to seek, find, and follow Your will so that their legacy will be exemplary. Guide them in the path You have created, inspiring them with the potency of Your powerful presence. May they trust You in times of adversity and prosperity, knowing that they will reap a productive harvest if they persevere.

We pray in Your great Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CORKER). The majority leader is recognized.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—H.R. 203

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the previous order with respect to H.R. 203 be modified so that the Senate proceed to the consideration of H.R. 203 at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, February 3, 2015, with all other provisions of the order being in effect.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MCCONNELL. For the information of my colleagues, this moves the vote on the Clay Hunt suicide prevention bill to noon tomorrow. We are all doing this because of unforeseen weather events that have created travel problems for Senators on both sides of the aisle.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015—MOTION TO PROCEED

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I move to proceed to H.R. 240.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the motion.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

Motion to proceed to Calendar No. 5, H.R. 240, a bill making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

WELCOMING BACK THE DEMOCRATIC LEADER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, let me say first that I want to welcome back our colleague, the minority leader. He has had a challenging month. We are happy to see him back here in the Senate. We wish him well in his recovery, which looks as if it is coming along nicely.

Welcome back, I say on behalf of all of our colleagues to the Democratic leader.

PRESIDENT OBAMA'S BUDGET AND CLAY HUNT SUICIDE PREVENTION FOR AMERICAN VETERANS ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, in his State of the Union Address, President Obama promised to deliver a budget filled with "ideas that are practical, not partisan." I know many Americans were glad to hear him say that. The American people elected a right-of-center Congress focused on jobs and reform, so it makes sense that a President would want to send commonsense ideas that could pass the Congress that the people actually elected last November.

He could have proposed a budget that was balanced. He could have challenged us with serious, innovative reforms aimed at getting spending under control or effective ideas to create jobs and opportunity. There are so many positive things he could have done instead of phoning in another tired tax-and-spend manifesto. We basically see the same thing every year. It focuses on growing the bureaucracy instead of opportunity. It does not balance ever. Because it isn't designed to pass Congress, of course it doesn't pass Congress.

The budget is just one symptom of a wider disconnect. Rhetorically, at least, we hear the White House echo Republican calls for policies aimed at helping the middle class, but then we see the White House push more of the same stale, top-down policies favored by political bosses over on the left. As Americans who have lost health plans or who are seeing health costs skyrocket could tell you, the left's priorities often hurt the very people they purport to help.

This is the wrong approach. We need fresh ideas. Republicans want the President to join us in fighting for the middle class, so we think he should take opportunities such as the budget

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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to actually rally Members of both parties behind serious ideas that can actually pass. We think the country could really benefit from his positive leadership.

His next test will come soon as the new Congress works to develop the kind of budget the American people deserve. We are going to focus on growing the economy from the ground up, with more future-oriented reform, more jobs, more opportunity. We are going to pursue ideas that make government leaner, more efficient, and more effective. We are going to honor the hard-working men and women who count on us to spend their dollars wisely, not offload Washington's problems onto them with higher taxes. That is what the American people expect. It is the kind of practical agenda you pursue if you are serious about helping the middle class. It is what I hope the President will now encourage Members of both parties to work toward.

The truth is, there is a lot we can achieve with constructive, bipartisan cooperation. The bill we will vote on tomorrow is a great example of that. Members in both parties agree it is time to pursue positive reform for veterans who are hurting. The Clay Hunt Suicide Prevention for American Veterans Act aims to reduce the tragedy that befalls too many of our heroes and the heartbreak that befalls too many of their families. We lose thousands of veterans every year to suicide. Now is the time for practical, bipartisan action to do something about it.

The legislation we will vote on tomorrow will provide more of the suicide prevention and mental health support our veterans deserve. It will help veterans transition from Active-Duty service. It will take steps to improve the effectiveness of programs to help heroes in need.

This bill has already passed the House unanimously. I hope we can achieve a similar result in the Senate and send this bipartisan legislation to the White House for signature.

Before I finish, I would like to thank both the senior Senator from Georgia, Mr. ISAKSON, and the senior Senator from Arizona, Mr. MCCAIN, for their tireless work on this bill. These Senators care deeply about the men and women who give everything—literally everything—to protect us. Veterans are lucky to have such strong champions on their side.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Democratic leader is recognized.

EXPRESSING MY APPRECIATION

Mr. REID. Mr. President, it is really good to be back. I appreciate the kind remarks of the Republican leader. Senator MCCONNELL and his lovely wife Elaine have been very good to Landra and me over the years. We appreciate their words of support.

I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues who have been so kind and thoughtful during my recovery time. The Presiding Officer—I received your phone call. That was very warm. I very much appreciate it.

WORKING FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, as Senators, our work is measured by what we are able to accomplish for the middle class, what we are able to accomplish for the American people. I have watched very closely and been in touch, as we all know, having read all the stories, of what has gone on here in the last month. I am sorry to say that we spent 1 month on a bill calling for the importation of oil from a foreign country and then exporting that oil outside of America. I am glad we were able to work it out so that we had a number of amendments. That was really good. We felt very comfortable with that. I wish we could have done some more, but I am satisfied with what we were able to do. Of course now we await the action of the President, as we should be doing.

The work of this Senate is based upon—should be based upon—what we are able to do for the middle class. We are a constructive minority, and we proved that the last month. To show how constructive we are, take for example TRIA, terrorism insurance. It is so important up and down the Las Vegas Strip, Times Square, everywhere in America. That is important to the business community. Yet that was held up in the last Congress by my Republican colleagues. To show our good faith, we were able to pass that in a matter of hours. That is the way it should be.

We are going to vote tomorrow on the Clay Hunt bill. That is an important piece of legislation. I have worked hard on suicide prevention. We need to keep working on it. Each year in America 32,000 Americans kill themselves. That does not take into consideration the car accidents that are not reported properly, hunting accidents. We have about 24 veterans who kill themselves every day in America. We believe that is important for America, and because of that, we are going to pass that in a matter of hours tomorrow. That is the way it should be.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. REID. Mr. President, there is an issue that is now before this body. It is an important issue. All we need to look at is what is going on around the world—terrorism attack in Australia; terrorism attack in Canada; in France, scores of people killed. We saw what happened in Belgium. Terrorism is for real. Senator MCCASKILL said it about the best way I have seen it described. The Republicans are more afraid of the DREAMers than they are of ISIS. By the way, ISIS said they are coming our

way. Why should we be dealing with issues that have nothing to do with homeland security?

We should pass a homeland security bill with no strings attached to it. That is where we are going to wind up. If the Republican majority in the House and the Senate wants to have a CR for Homeland Security—a continuing resolution—that would cut about \$1 billion out of the budget for Homeland Security.

Homeland Security was developed after 9/11. It was a bipartisan piece of legislation that consolidated 22 different government agencies. We need to get that done and sent to the President in a clean fashion. If my Republican colleagues have some problem with something the President has done on immigration, for example, hit it head-on. Do not hide behind Homeland Security. We need a safe homeland. I hope my Republican colleagues will join us to get that done as quickly as possible.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, what is the order of business on the floor of the Senate at this moment?

THE PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate is in morning business.

WELCOMING BACK THE MINORITY LEADER

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, first I wish to welcome back my colleague and friend, the minority leader of the Senate, Senator HARRY REID. I was told he was coming back. I found a way to avoid a blizzard in Chicago to be here with him because I wanted to be here for this moment.

It is a great moment for those of us on the Democratic side of the aisle to have him back. I know it means a lot to him. We have been on the phone. I know he has gone through a lot in terms of his injury and also his impatience at home when for a period of time he could not read a book, which he loves to do, watch television, or do much of anything. I know he was anxious to get back in the saddle and back here, and we are so glad he has returned.

His message at the outset shows he may be scarred and beaten up, but there is no diminution of the fighting spirit that HARRY REID has brought to the Senate floor on so many occasions with his opening remarks, reminding us we are going to embark this week on a question about the funding of the Department of Homeland Security.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY FUNDING

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, of all things, the Department of Homeland